



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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President Begaye denies funding for Phoenix Indian Center, Toyei Industries, and school buses

WINDOW ROCK – Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland) is questioning President Russell Begaye’s decision to deny funding for the Phoenix Indian Center, Toyei Industries, Inc., and for school buses for the St. Bonaventure Indian Mission School.

During a special session on Feb. 16, the Navajo Nation Council approved supplemental appropriations for Phoenix Indian Center in the amount of \$148,325, Toyei Industries, Inc. in the amount of \$300,000, and St. Bonaventure Indian Mission School in the amount of \$299,139.

In three separate memoranda dated March 4, President Begaye stated that he exercised the presidential line item veto authority to eliminate only portions of the three funding requests, however, the President also instead included language denying the entire funding amounts for the three requests.

“The President is attempting to legislate by picking and choosing what to fund and what not to fund within each resolution, which is the function and authority of Council,” Speaker Bates said.

In reference to the three funding requests for Phoenix Indian Center, Toyei Industries, Inc., and St. Bonaventure Indian Mission School, the President wrote:

“After review of Resolution No. CF-21-18, I hereby exercise my line-item veto to:

1. Section Three. Approving the Supplemental Appropriation from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance in the amount of \$148,325.00 for Phoenix Indian Center, BU No. 119025.”

“After review of Resolution No. CF-19-18, I hereby exercise my line-item veto to:

1. Section Three. Approving the Supplemental Appropriation from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance in the amount of \$300,000, for Toyei Industries, Inc.”

“After review of Resolution No. CF-17-18, I hereby exercise my line-item veto to:

1. Section Three. Approving the Supplemental Appropriation from the

Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance in the amount of \$299,139.00 grant to the St. Bonaventure Indian Mission School.

“With each of these statements, the President vetoes the full appropriations made by the Council to each entity,” Speaker Bates stated. “Without approving the language contained in ‘Section Three’ of the resolutions, the three amounts are completely vetoed.”

Speaker Bates said President Begaye’s misguided practice of the line item veto authority increases the need to initiate guidelines to protect the integrity of the presidential line item veto authority, and to hold the president accountable for the use of the authority granted by the Navajo people.

“President Begaye erred and unfortunately it has serious consequences for Phoenix Indian Center, Toyei Industries, and the students of St. Bonaventure School,” added Speaker Bates.

The Council considered the funding requests during a two-day special session held on Feb. 15 and 16, in which Council members approved a total of 15 supplemental funding requests from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance. Of the 15 funding requests approved by the Council, the president approved nine requests, line item vetoed funding for two requests, and line item vetoed partial funding for three requests. The President is still considering one funding request.

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